BANJO À CINQ CORDES

A CLIFFORD ESSEX BANJO COLLECTION

Présentation d'une collection de sept banjos anglais à cinq cordes

Gérard De Smaele

Février 2023

Le catalogue Clifford Essex de 1928 et les pages publicitaires parues dans le *BMG Magazine* sont accessibles en cliquant sur un lien. Libre au lecteur de les imprimer séparément.

Illustration de la page de titre : *The Clifford Essex 'Concert Grand'. BMG Magazine,* december 1910.

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Vues de face

‘The New Concert Grand’

‘The Concert Grand’

‘The Imperial’

‘The Professional’

‘The Special’

‘The Special Wood Hoop’

‘The New Paragon’

Vues de la face antérieure de la caisse

‘The New Concert Grand’

‘The Concert Grand’

‘The Imperial’

‘The Professional’

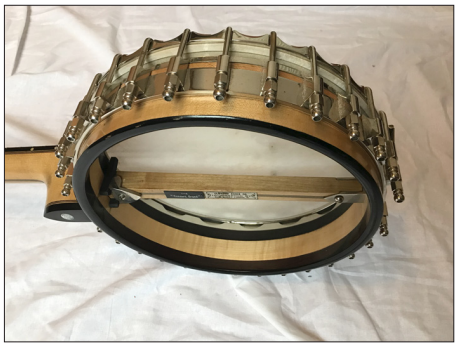
‘The Special’

‘The Special Wood Hoop’

‘The New Paragon’

Vues arrière de la caisse

‘The New Concert Grand’



‘The Concert Grand’

‘The Imperial’

‘The Professional’

‘The Special’

‘The Special Wood Hoop’

‘The New Paragon’

Plaques d’identifications sur le *dowel stick*[1]

‘The New Concert Grand’
Clifford Essex & Son Ltd.

‘The Concert Grand’
Clifford Essex Co.

‘The Imperial’
Clifford Essex & Son

‘The Professional’
Clifford Essex Co.

‘The Special’
Clifford Essex Co.

‘The Special Wood Hoop’
Clifford Essex Co.

‘The New Paragon’
Clifford Essex & Son

1 Les marques observables sur le *dowel stick* résultent de l’usage du dispositif permettant la fixation d’un résonateur. Voir la photo p. 6.

Chevillers : logo de Clifford Essex

'The New Concert Grand'

'The Concert Grand'

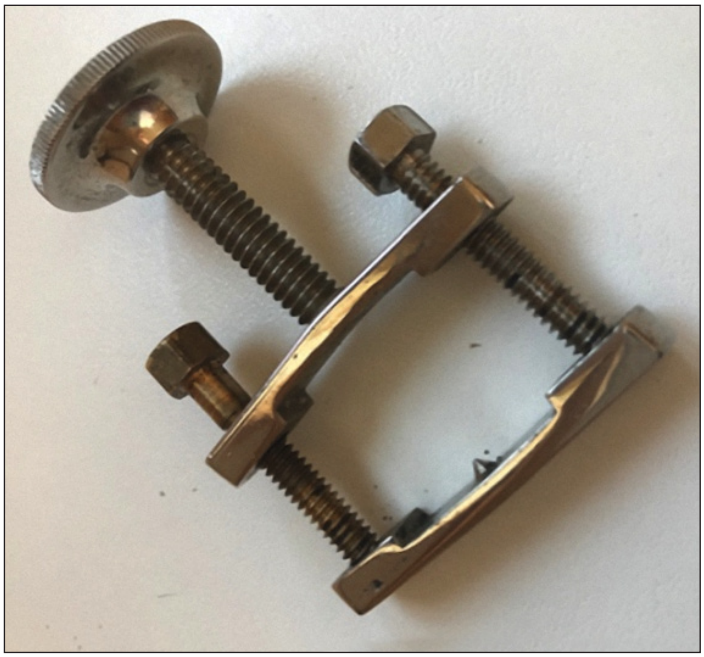
'The Imperial'

'The Professional'

'The Special'

'The Special Wood Hoop'

'The New Paragon'



Dispositif permettant la fixation d’un résonateur.
Il laissera une trace sur le *dowel stick*.

Exemple d’empreinte caractéristique laissée sur
le *dowel stick* de notre *‘Professional’*.

Liste des instruments

Les descriptions mentionnées dans le catalogue de 1928
et les annonces publicitaires parues dans le
BMG Magazine (voir annexes), indiquent toutes les caractéristiques de ces instruments[2].

1. **Clifford Essex 'Concert Grand'** – # 1641
   - Clifford Essex Co. – London, 15a Grafton Street / Bond Street – avant 1919
   - Cat. p. 8
   - *BMG*, December 1910; June 1932; July 1937

2. **Clifford Essex 'Concert Grand' ('New Concert Grand')** - # 1712
   - Clifford Essex & Son Ltd – London, 30 Shaftesbury Avenue – entre 1936 et 1942

3. **Clifford Essex 'Imperial'** – # 196
   - Clifford Essex & Son - London, 15a Grafton Street / Bond Street – entre 1919 et 1936
   - Cat. p. 13
   - *BMG*, November 1930

4. **Clifford Essex 'Professional'** – # 171
   - Clifford Essex Co. – London, 15a Grafton Street / Bond Street – avant 1919
   - Cat. p. 10
   - *BMG*, October 1922

5. **Clifford Essex 'Special'** – no serial number
   - Clifford Essex Co. - London, 15a Grafton Street / Bond Street – avant 1919
   - Cat. p. 11
   - *BMG*, April 1904; October 1911, November 1930

6. **Clifford Essex 'Special',** wood Hoop – no serial number
   - Clifford Essex Co. – London, 15a Grafton Street / Bond Street – avant 1919
   - Cat. p. 12

7. **Clifford Essex 'Paragon' ('New Paragon')** – # 1609 (the earliest number known)
   - Clifford Essex & Son – London, 15a Grafton Street / Bond Street – entre 1919 et 1936
   - Cat. pp. 6-7
   - *BMG*, March 1934; November 1941

2 Il est à noter que le diapason de toute la gamme des instruments proposée par Clifford Essex est de 26 ½″, une longueur appliquée - avec de légères variantes - par la plupart des fabricants depuis les dernières années du 19e siècle. C'est notamment le cas des 'Regent', 'Whyte Laydie' et 'Tubaphone' de Fairbanks et de Vega. Pour un même jeu de cordes, nous savons qu'un allongement du diapason entraîne une tension plus forte, et inversement. Cette longueur vibrante des cordes affecte bien entendu - entre autres facteurs - la sonorité et la facilité du jeu. Les facteurs contemporains, qui alimentent le marché contemporain de la musique *old time* accordent beaucoup d'importance à cette mesure. Richard Jones-Bamman, dans son *Building New Banjos for an Old Time World* (University of Illinois Press, 2017), nous parle avec précision de cette donnée importante (voir p. 89 et suiv.).

The New Concert Grand

The Concert Grand

The Imperial

The New Paragon

The Professional

The Special

The Special Wood Hoop

Présentation

Une collection de banjos Clifford Essex

Depuis son introduction en Grande Bretagne par Joel Walker Sweeney (1810-1860) en 1843, l'Angleterre est sans conteste devenue la seconde patrie du banjo à cinq cordes. Sweeney y suscita de très nombreux émules, ainsi que l'émergence de nouveaux talents, à l'instar de James Buckley (1803-1872) et de ses fils, qui se rendront célèbres jusqu'aux USA. Que ce soit dans le domaine du spectacle, de l'édition musicale, de la lutherie, l'importance et la durée de ce phénomène seront d'une grande ampleur. Calquée sur le modèle américain du *minstrel show*, puis du *finger-style,* la tradition anglaise développera également ses particularités propres (modèles à 6, 7 et 8 cordes, *tunneled fith, zither-banjo…)*, et jouera même un rôle déterminant dans l'adoption définitive de la 'C notation' au début du 20e siècle.

De nombreux exemplaires représentatifs de cette tradition anglaise sont conservés dans des collections privées, comme par exemple celles qui avaient été constituées par Reuben Reubens (1940-2020)[3] et par Pete Stanley (1937-2020), toutes deux à Londres, ou l'actuelle collection de Keith Wilson (né vers 1950), à Leeds. Ces ensembles rendent compte d'une production d'instruments particulièrement riche et abondante, à laquelle on peut par ailleurs ajouter un volumineux corpus d'éditions musicales et d'enregistrements. Des quelques grands noms qui auront émergé de cet engouement pour le banjo, celui de **Clifford Essex** (1869-1946) bénéficie encore de nos jours d'une réputation privilégiée. La maison, restée active après le décès de son fondateur, éditera aussi, de 1903 à 1976 (pour réapparaître de 2009 à 2020)[4], le *BMG magazine* issu, avec *The Cadenza,* du BMG Movement né aux USA à la fin du 19e siècle.

Clifford Essex fait manifestement partie des meilleurs fabricants de banjos anglais de la première moitié du 20e siècle. Son catalogue de 1928 – à consulter en annexe –, offre toute une gradation de modèles de qualité. Il est à noter que de 1900 à 1940 et même au-delà , les Clifford Essex suivront de près l'évolution générale du design de l'instrument, tel que les modifications de la structure de la caisse, liées à la recherche de la puissance acoustique et à l'usage du plectre dès la fin des années 1910. En Angleterre, le *finger-style* ayant survécu plus tard qu'aux États-Unis, la marque Clifford Essex demeurera jusqu'à nos jours une des grandes références du banjo dit 'classique', pouvant rivaliser avec les banjos S.S. Stewart, Fairbanks, Cole, Farland, Vega, Van Eps, Bacon… produits aux USA. On notera que les Clifford Essex présentent une palette variée de caisses de résonnance, allant du 'clad metal rim' et du 'wood hoop'[5] des débuts, à des modèles plus lourds avec 'tone ring' métallique[6]. Dès les années 1920, apparaîtront des *resonator banjos* à cinq cordes, comme le 'New Concert Grand' et le 'Paragon' créé en 1924. Leur résonateur présente une face externe concave, censée mieux projeter le son vers l'avant, tandis que la conception générale des banjos vendus par Essex se démarque quelque peu des modèles de référence américains[7]. Après la première guerre mondiale, tous les modèles de Clifford Essex se déclineront donc

3 "Reuben Reubens – Banjo Collector Extraordinaire." *BMG Magazine*, #897, Spring 2020, p. 24; Mac Yasuda, Jim Washburn. "The Big Plink." The Fretboard Journal, issue 16, Winter 2009.
Après son rachat complet par le japonais Akira Tsumura, une partie de cette collection Reuben sera transférée au musée des instruments de musique de Hamamatsu. L'autre sera livrée à la vente et dispersée par le marchand John Bernunzio à Rochester.

4 Consultable en ligne : *The John Field Memorial BMG Library. Voir Références.*

5 À comparer avec le 'wood rim banjo', sans *tone ring* métallique, du grand virtuose A.A. Farland. Voir le catalogue Farland ; Plainfield, NJ, 1902, dont une version numérique est accessible au MiM.

6 Le 'Concert Grand' est le version anglaise du Vega 'Whyte Laydie'. Voir les catalogues déposés au MiM.

7 Voir les *tone rings* présentés dans la copie des catalogues anciens déposés au MiM.

en versions plectrum, tenor et hybrides, tout en continuant à soutenir fermement la version originale à cinq cordes[8], qui subira d'autre part une plus nette perte de popularité aux États-Unis entre les deux guerres mondiales.

Si les Clifford Essex étaient – tous types et modèles confondus – rarement présents aux USA avant la grande guerre de 1940-45, ils domineront cependant le marché anglais, utilisés par les joueurs de cinq cordes les plus en vue de l'époque, telles que Joe Morley (1867-1937), Tarrant Bailey Sr. (1885-1972), ou Emile Grimshaw (1880-1943) avant que ce dernier n'entreprenne sa propre production et ne cède du terrain au banjo *plectrum* devenu plus 'lucratif'. Plus proches de nous, ce seront encore nos contemporains Tarrant Bailey Jr. (1907-1987), William Ball (1915-2000), Derek Lillywhite (1935-2017), ainsi que Rob McKillop (né en 1959) ou Chris Sands (né vers 1965), que nous verrons utiliser ces cinq cordes. Ils sortent parfois de l'atelier d'Alfred Weaver – le 'Stradivarius' du banjo anglais –, tout en portant le logo caractéristique de Clifford Essex sur le cheviller. Aux USA, à la sortie de la seconde guerre mondiale, ces banjos anglais seront prisés des membres de l'American Banjo Fraternity – une association créée en 1948 autour d'anciennes gloires[9] –, qui a œuvré à la préservation et au retour de la pratique du '*old classic style*'. Aujourd'hui, après des débuts remarqués, sur un banjo Bacon & Day 'Senorita', le jeune américain Aaron Lewis (né vers 1980) semble lui aussi s'intéresser de près à cette production purement anglaise.

Logo de Clifford Essex sur le cheviller de notre 'Special - Wood Hoop'.
Coll. G. DS.

Dowel stick de l'instrument ci-dessus.
Plaque d'identification de la maison Clifford Essex Co., 19a Grafton Street, London : utilisée de 1900 à 1919.
Coll. G. De Smaele

8 Si l' '*original pre-war five-string Gibson banjo*' – la référence absolue pour le *bluegrass style* –, est rare et recherché, il n'en est pas de même pour un Clifford Essex 'Concert Grand' ou 'Paragon'. Bien que leur qualité soit comparable aux meilleurs banjos américains – ce que l'anglais Pete Stanley (1937-2020) a brillamment démontré dans un contexte de *bluegrass* –, ces derniers se négocient (2022) à des prix de loin inférieurs.

9 Elias Kaufman. "A Brief History of the American Banjo Fraternity." *The Five-Stringer,* #132, Winter 1978.

Banjos à cinq cordes, proposés dans le catalogue de 1928

Dans le catalogue Clifford Essex de 1928, ils sont classés par ordre de prix. Les annonces publiées dans le *BMG Magazine* (voir annexe) nous donnent la date approximative de leur introduction sur le marché, ainsi que de leur disponibilité. Il est à remarquer qu'ils ne sont pas tous répertoriés dans le *1001 Banjos* de A. Tsumura (1994), ce dernier ouvrage s'étant principalement concentré sur les 'Paragon' et les 'New Paragon' tenor et plectrum 'de luxe'.
Les noms en caractères gras indiquent les instruments présents dans ma collection personnelle (2023).

The 'Popular'
The 'Clipper'
The 'Imperial'
The 'Special' - wood hoop
The 'Special' - metal hoop
The 'Professional'
The 'Boudoir Grand'
The 'Concert Grand' - nouveau nom attribué au modèle 'XX Special'
The 'Paragon' - introduit en 1924
D'autres modèles viendront compléter l'offre après la publication du catalogue de 1928 :

The 'New Concert Grand'
The 'Regal'
The 'New Paragon', un 'Paragon' en version *top tension*
The 'New Clipper'
The 'New Imperial'
The 'New Regal'.

Voir aussi les 'Paravox' (inspiré du 'Vegavox de Vega), 'Paragon Artist' et 'Paragon de Luxe'. Venus plus tard, ces instruments seront essentiellement des banjos à quatre cordes qui, rappelons-le encore, étaient initialement prévus pour le montage de cordes métalliques et joués au plectre.
Il est à noter que tous les instruments de ma collection présentent un diamètre de peau de 11 pouces. Une caisse de 12″ étant réservée au seul modèle 'Professional'.

Clifford Essex avait aussi trois zither-banjos à son catalogue : 'Grade 1, 2 et 3'. Il proposait aussi des résonateurs amovibles destinés à être appliqués sur les *open back banjos* non équipés d'un *flange.*

Chronologie

De 1900 à 1936, après quelques années de partenariat avec Alfred Cammeyer (1862-1949), la Clifford Essex Company s'est établie sous sa propre enseigne à Londres, au 19a de la Grafton Street[10]. Le '*dowel stick'* de nos instruments portent tous une plaquette d'identification mentionnant la raison sociale et l'adresse de la firme. Dans cet intervalle de temps on lui connait deux périodes distinctes : celle de la 'Clifford Essex Co., de 1900 à 1919, et celle de la 'Clifford Essex & Son, active de 1919 à 1936. Elle devient ensuite la 'Clifford Essex & Son Ltd, une S.P.R.L., établie au 90 Shaftsbury Avenue, jusqu'à sa liquidation en 1942. Reprise par Alfred Perry Sharpe, la 'Clifford Essex Music Co. Ltd. déménage au 8 New Compton Street pour y demeurer de 1942 à 1957. Après une nouvelle liquidation, la firme terminera sa course, de 1957 à 1976, au 20 Earlham Street. Après un arrêt de près de trois décennies, 2007 marquera le retour de son activité éditoriale, de divers services et d'une production limitée de banjos de qualité, ciblant

10 Voir annexe : "The Clifford Essex Studio, 19 Grafton Street." *BMG Magazine,* du vol. XXIII, #256, August 1926 au vol. XXIV, #261, January 1927.

principalement les banjoïstes dits 'classiques'. Cette nouvelle firme est alors localisée à Fakenham, UK. Faute d'un numéro de série – car beaucoup d'instruments n'en possèdent pas –, les indications[11] inscrites sur les plaquettes apposées sur le *dowell stick* seront les seuls éléments nous autorisant à dater approximativement les instruments[12].

1900 – 1919 : CLIFFORD ESSEX & CO, 15a Grafton Street.
1919 – 1936 : CLIFFORD ESSEX & SON, 15a Grafton Street.
1936 – 1942 : CLIFFORD ESSEX & SON LTD, 90 Shaftsbury Ave.,
1942 – 1957 : CLIFFORD ESSEX MUSIC CO. LTD, 8 New Compton St.,
1957 – 1975 : CLIFFORD ESSEX MUSIC CO. LTD, 20 Earlham Street.
2009 – until now[13] : CLIFFORD ESSEX MUSIC CO. LTD, 7 Rose Walk, Wicken Green, Fakenham.

À son origine, la maison Clifford Essex confiait la réalisation de ses instruments à divers luthiers et manufactures (Spencer, Weaver, Langham à Londres, ainsi que Houghton à Birmingham) [14]. Ce n'est qu'à partir de 1904 que son propre atelier fut ouvert à Londres. Essex a toujours travaillé avec les meilleurs artisans de son époque. En plus de sa production en interne, il continuera cependant encore à négocier avec ses anciens sous-traitants. Certains instruments d'avant la guerre de 1914-18, portant son logo métallique sur le cheviller, sont manifestement issus de l'atelier d'Alfred Weaver (1857, 1939). Lorsqu'il produisait pour Essex, Weaver travaillait cependant selon ses propres critères et spécifications. Sachons que cette provenance (Weaver) reste des plus recherchées pour le 'classic style'. En 2020, la nouvelle Clifford Essex Co. Ltd. (Fakenham, UK) proposait encore, sur commande, un modèle 'Clifford Essex Weaver', une copie artisanale moderne, proche du 'C.E. Special Wood Hoop' qui avait été lancé sur le marché il y a plus d'un siècle[15].

Les banjos présentés ci-dessous sont tous en condition de jeu et peuvent supporter la tension des cordes pour lesquels ils ont été conçus : boyau/nylon ou métal. Produits dans la première moitié du 20e siècle, ils ont – contrairement à beaucoup d'instruments plus anciens une surprenante puissance acoustique. Disposer d'un tel ensemble permettrait au banjoïstes, plus particulièrement aux amateurs du banjo dit 'classique', d'expérimenter toute la palette des sonorités recherchées pour ce style. Ils ne devraient cependant pas être contraints à se limiter à ce style. En pratique, ils devraient tous supporter la tension de cordes métalliques et permettre – par le choix de la bonne hauteur du chevalet – un réglage approprié de la hauteur des cordes sur la touche[16].

On peut en quelque sorte les considérer comme des instruments témoins : *clad metal, deep rim*, *large rim, wood hoop, heavy tone ring, open back* ou *resonator banjo.* Sans oublier la possibilité d'expérimenter tous les choix possibles de cordes, de peaux, de chevalets, de cordiers, ou tout simplement de réglage ; tout en sachant que ces choix seront fonction de l'orientation recherchée par le musicien : *classic style, old time music,* voire *bluegrass.*[17]

11 En supposant que ces indications soient toujours exactes, car on aurait constaté que d'anciennes plaques d'identification auraient pu être utilisées après 1919, après le changement de raison sociale ?
12 Nous suggérons à ce sujet de s'en référer aux annonces publicitaires publiées dans le *BMG Magazine,* voir annexe.
13 Jusqu'au décès du repreneur Clem Vickery (1949-2022). L'affaire devrait perdurer sous la direction de son fils. Affaire à suivre !
14 Voir le site 'Vintage Banjo Makers' : https://www.vintagebanjomaker.com/Essex
15 Voir les annonces des dernières éditions du *BMG Magazine* (2009-2020).
16 Voir : Larry Sandberg. *Complete Banjo Repair* (1979).
17 L'anglais Pete Stanley (xx-xx) jouait sur un 'Concert Grand' et a toujours été un grand défenseur des Clifford Essex.

Quant aux mécaniques originales à friction, elles conviennent aux cordes de nylon. Pour les cordes métalliques, il est tentant de les remplacer par des mécaniques démultipliées à engrenages. Gardons-nous cependant d'agrandir les orifices percés dans le cheviller, car cette opération irréversible nuirait à l'authenticité originale des instruments.

Gérard De Smaele
Février 2023
https://www.desmaele5str.be

Orientations bibliographiques :

- *The BMG Magazine*. Copie digitale déposée au MiM de la presque entièreté de la publication, 2022.
  Voir *The John Field Memorial BMG Library:*
  https://classic-banjo.ning.com/page/bmg-magazines
- Bob Carlin. *The Birth of the Banjo: Joel Walker Sweeney and Early Minstrelsy.* Jefferson NC: McFarland Publications, 2007, 193 p.
- Clifford Essex & Son. *Musical Instruments.* London: Clifford Essex & Son, 1928, 64 p. [catalogue C.E.]
- Gérard De Smaele. *The Wayne Adams' Old 'Classic' Banjo Collection: 1897-1952*. Vincennes : Frémeaux & Associés, FA5816, 2022.
  Liner notes:
  https://www.fremeaux.com/download/60626e9553de5f1ca7c30e12c7954c89749fd3f7 et
  https://archive.org/details/classic-banjo
- Gérard De Smaele. *Banjo à cinq cordes. Point de vue organologique.* Fauroeulx, G. De Smaele,1984, 73 p. http://www.desmaele5str.be/pdf/banjo5CordesOptimise.pdf
- A.A. Farland. *Wood Rim Banjos.* Plainfield, NJ, 1902.
- *The Five-Stringer.* Organe de l'American Banjo Fraternity. Tous les numéros de la revue sont disponibles au MiM.
- Robert Ineson. *The Life of Joe Morley (1867-1937)*:
  http://classic-banjo.ning.com/page/the-life-of-joe-morley-1 (July 31, 2022)
- Richard Jones-Bamman, *Building New Banjos for an Old Time World,* University of Illinois Press, 2017, 271 p.
- Lewis M. Stern. "British Banjos! A View From America." *The Banjoist Brodsheet,* #194, March 2006, pp. 1-2. https://archive.org/details/classic-banjo
- "Reubens Reuben." *BMG Magazine,* #897, Spring 2020.
- Larry Sandberg. *Complete Banjo Repair.* New York, London, Tokyo, Sydney, Cologne: Oak Publications, 1979, 112 p.
- Alfred Perry Sharpe. "Clifford Essex Passes." *BMG Magazine,* March 1946 (winter 2016).
- Akira Tsumura. One Thousand and One Banjos, The Tsumura Collection. Tokyo, New York, London: Kodansha International, 1993, 904 p. ['paragon', Reuben's Collection]
- *The Vintage Banjo Maker's Website*: https://www.vintagebanjomaker.com
- Robert Winans, Elias Kaufman. "Minstrel and Classic Banjo: American and English Connections." American Music, vol. XII/1, Spring 1994, pp. 1-30.
  http://grimshaworigin.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/WinansAndKaufman1994.pdf

Partitions conservées au MiM

Exemples tirés du répertoire 'classique'

La 'Phil Spear's Collection' comprend plus de deux milles titres de partitions destinées au banjo dit 'classique'. Le MiM en conserve l'entièreté, sous forme digitale. On peut aussi s'orienter vers la bibliothèque de l'American Banjo Fraternity, le site 'Classic Banjo.ning' ou autres ressources en ligne.

https://classic-banjo.ning.com/page/scores

D'autre part, le MiM conserve une série de partitions originales, offertes à la bibliothèque du musée en 2018 et en 2021. Ces pièces sont de parfaits exemples de musique à jouer sur nos Clifford Essex.

http://www.desmaele5str.be/dossiersArchives

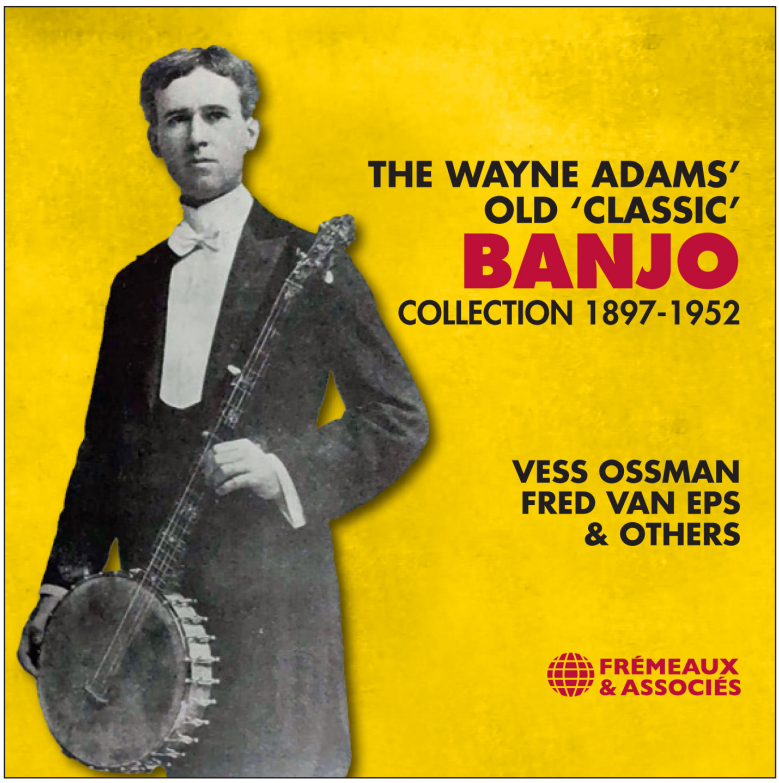
Des partitions soigneusement doublées de tablatures, réalisées par Alan Middleton, font partie des éditions de la nouvelle Clifford Essex Music Co. Ltd., Fakenham (voir note 8). Elles sont protégées par un *copyright*.
Les compositeurs Joe Morley et Emile Grimshaw y sont abondamment représentés.

Quant à la revue *BMG Magazine*, elle représente naturellement elle aussi une abondante source de partitions. La quasi-totalité de cette publication est accessible sur le site 'Classic Banjo.ning' :

https://classic-banjo.ning.com/page/bmg-magazines

Voir aussi les liner notes et les références accompagnant le triple CD édité par Frémeaux et Associés en 2022.

https://www.fremeaux.com/download/60626e9553de5f1ca7c30e12c7954c89749fd3f7



Orientations discographiques

En ce qui concerne les anciens enregistrements du banjo dit 'classique', les ressources accessibles sur internet sont abondantes. Citons par exemple le site de la Bibliothèque du Congrès et celui de l'Université de Santa Barbara, qui a mis en ligne de nombreux enregistrements accompagnés de notices discographiques précises et complètes. D'autre part, les amateurs se tournent surtout vers le site 'Classic Banjo.Ning'.

Voir aussi les *liner notes* et les références accompagnant le triple CD édité par Frémeaux et Associés en 2022.

https://www.fremeaux.com/download/60626e9553de5f1ca7c30e12c7954c89749fd3f7

Rééditions d'enregistrements anciens :

- *Acoustic Recordings of the Banjo.* Phonozoic 201-202, 2009.
- *Tarrant Bailey's Collection, vol. 1: Private Cylinders of England's Greatest Banjoist.* Neophone 19, 2003.
- *Banjo-istics: Finger-Stylists and Plectrum.* Americana 880, s.d. [enregistrements des années 1940-1950[44]]
- *A Banjo Cocktail,* Neovox tapes, 5 vol., ca. 1970.
- *Classic Banjo: 1925-1978 by Tarrant Bailey Jr.* The Bollington Collection. Cassette 149.
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Enregistrements modernes[46] :

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- Bradbury Frank. *Banjo Method.* Mel Bay MB-93238M, 2018. [études jouées par Rob MacKillop]
- Bradbury Frank. *Master of the Five-String Banjo.* Rim Records CO-1943, 1967.
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- Bullard John*. *The Classical Banjo.* Dargason Music DMCD-115, 1995.
- Camp Archibald. *A.L. Camp Plays the Banjo.* Folkways FG3525, 1965.
- Cadwell Paul. *Paul Cadwell, Shirley Keller and Charlie Wright.* Twilight Records PSC 165, 1972. [On peut le voir avec Pete Seeger dans "Rainbow Quest", épisode n° 36, 1965]
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- Keith Bill*. *Banjoistics.* Rounder 0148, 1984. [on y trouvera essentiellement sa version de *Nola*, une composition historique de Felix Arndt ayant inspiré celle plus ancienne de Fred Van Eps]
- Knopf Bill*. *John Philip Sousa Marches Performed on 5-String Banjo by Bill Knopf.* First Inversion Pub. FIR-CD-006, 1994.
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- Lewis Aaron. *Mozart of the Banjo.* Tiki Palour Recordings, 2020.
- Lillywhite Dereck. *Banjo Reminiscences.* Rounder 0095, 1980.
- MacKillop Rob. *Early American Parlour Banjo.* Mel Bay MB-22172M, 2016.
- Middleton Alan. *Early Minstrel Music.* Clifford Essex, 2012.
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- Nix Michael. *Barton Cove.* "cdbaby", 2008. [banjo à 7 cordes, à l'instar des banjos anglais du 19e siècles]
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- Seeger Pete. *The Goofing-Off Suite,* Folkways FA-2045, 1955.
- Sokolow Fred*. *Ragtime Banjo Bluegrass Style.* KM-212, 1981.
- Smith Paul*. *Mysterious Barricades.* Flying Fish, FF-264, 1984.
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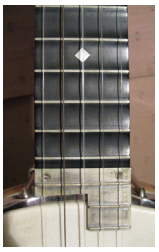
- Weissberg Eric. *Frederic Hand's Baroque And On The Street.* CBS-FM36687, 1981. [E. Weissberg, banjo]

En plus de Bill Keith, de Béla Fleck et de Tony Trischka il est à noter que plusieurs personnalités du *bluegrass* et de la musique *old time* ont enregistré, de manière sporadique des œuvres du répertoire classique. On en trouve divers exemples sur disques et sur internet : Jimmy Arnold*, John Mc Euen*, Bill Evans, Hank Sapoznik, Jody Stecher, Stephen Wade…

Carte de visite d'un banjoïste classique et son banjo *fretless*.



La version 'flush fret' de la touche du banjo Van Eps 'Recording'. Bien que dotée de frettes, elle rappelle le *fretless*. Photo G. De Smaele. ABF Rally, Octobre 2017.

Bien que 'You Tube' nous en livre une belle quantité, les enregistrements plus récents sont protégés par des droits de reproduction et sont moins facilement accessibles en ligne.
Une copie digitale de toute ma collection personnelle a été confiée au MiM.

Notices

Quelques remarques en marge des descriptions mentionnées dans le catalogue de 1928 et des annonces publicitaires parues dans le *BMG Magazine*.

1. **Clifford Essex 'Concert Grand'** – # 1641
   - Clifford Essex Co. – London, 15a Grafton Street / Bond Street – avant 1919
   - Cat., p. 8
   - *BMG*, décembre 1910
   - Remarques : *open back,* le 'CG' est considéré comme étant la version anglaise du 'Whyte Laydie' de Fairbanks, dont C.E. fut pour un temps le distributeur.

2. **Clifford Essex 'Concert Grand'** (New Concert Grand) – # 1712
   - Clifford Essex & Son Ltd – London, 30 Shaftesbury Avenue – entre 1936 et 1942
   - *BMG*, juillet 1937
   - Remarque : avec résonateur.

3. **Clifford Essex 'Imperial'** – # 196
   - Clifford Essex & Son – London, 15a Grafton Street / Bond Street – entre 1919 et 1936
   - Cat., p. 13
   - *BMG*, novembre 1930
   - Remarques : les mécaniques ne sont pas originales, peau 'Remo' synthétique.

4. **Clifford Essex 'Professional'** – # 171
   - Clifford Essex Co. - London, 15a Grafton Street / Bond Street – avant 1919
   - Cat., p. 10
   - *BMG*, Octobre 1922
   - Remarques : diamètre de la caisse = 12″, profondeur de la caisse = 3″, frettes non originales.

5. **Clifford Essex 'Special'** – no serial number
   - Clifford Essex Co. – London, 15a Grafton Street / Bond Street – avant 1919
   - Cat., p. 11
   - *BMG*, avril 1904
   - Remarques: caisse de 11″, profondeur de la caisse = 3″ ; les mécaniques à engrenages ne sont pas originales ; *one piece neck,* peau 'Remo' synthétique.

6. **Clifford Essex 'Special',** wood Hoop – no serial number
   - Clifford Essex Co. – London, 15a Grafton Street / Bond Street – avant 1919
   - Cat., p. 12
   - *BMG*, octobre 1911
   - Remarques : peau 'Remo' synthétique.

7. **Clifford Essex 'Paragon' ('New Paragon')** – # 1609 (the earliest number known)
   - Clifford Essex & Son – London, 15a Grafton Street / Bond Street – entre 1919 et 1936
   - Cat. pp. 6-7
   - *BMG*, March 1934; November 1941
   - Remarque : *top tension*.

Annexes

Clifford Essex Biography from the Vintage Banjo Maker's website

Was born William James Clifford Essex in Kentish Town, London in 1859

In 1882 he disolved the Herbert & Co. Wine Merchant partnership, he had with James Herbert.

In 1893 Clifford Essex and Alfred D. Cammeyer formed a partnership with offices and teaching studios at 59 Piccadilly, London. At first, the banjos and zither-banjos they sold under the brand name of "Essex & Cammeyer" where made for them by Temlett, Weaver, Wilmshurst and Windsor but early in 1896 they opened their own workshops at 13 Greek Street, Soho, and were soon employing fourteen workmen to make banjos and zither-banjos for them.

Clifford Essex dissolved his partnership with Cammayer in 1900 he formed his own firm at 15a Grafton Street, off New Bond Street, London. W. and instruments bearing. the name "Clifford Essex Co." were put on the market. At first all the banjos were made for Clifford Essex by Spencer, Weaver, Langham (in London) and Houghton (of Birmingham) – but in 1904 he started his own workshops at The Oval, Kensington, with Alfred Dare as foreman.

When Richard Spencer died in 1915, Clifford Essex bought his plant and stock and took his key makers into his employ. Although most of the CIifford Essex banjos sold in the early days were made in the Clifford Essex workshops, many he were still made by the above-mentioned outside makers; notably Richard Spencer. The Weaver – made banjos were made to Weaver' s own design although they were sold with the Clifford Essex label on them.

It should be emphasised that every Clifford Essex banjo (except the "Popular" model) was hand-made and each instrument individually assembled which often accounts for slight variations in models. and by then only their cheapest model (The "Popular") was made outside their own work-shops by Houghton of Birmingham.

In February 1936 the firm became a private limited company and the title changed to "Clifford-Essex & Son Ltd." Soon after the outbreak of World War II the manufacture of banjos (and other instruments) was greatly reduced owing, to shortage of materials and the military call-up of workmen. When the firm went into liquidation in 1942 manufacture ceased. The new company. with the title "Clifford Essex Music Co. Ltd." has made a few "special" banjos since 1945 and these bear the initials "C.E." in mother-of pearl inlaid into the peghead. From the cheapest to the dearest (£3.10.0. to £60)

Clifford Essex banjos carried the following model names: "Popular" "Clipper", "Imperial", "C.E. Special, Boudoir Grand", "Professional" (the only 12 in. hoop model), "Regal", "X.X. Special" (later called, Concert Grand"), "Paravox" (an instrument designed on the "Vegavox" lines with an 11 in. vellum, "Paragon", "New Paragon", "Paragon Artist" and "Paragon de Luxe" (the last two being gold plated). In addition tile firm produced three grades of zither-banjo: "Grade 111" (the cheapest), "Grade 11" and "Grade 1". To enable an owner of a Clifford Essex banjo to "date" his instrument, one can tell by the address in conjunction with the firm's title.

1900 to 1936 15a Grafton Street, London W,

1936 to 1942 90 Shaftesbury Ave.,

1942 to 1957 8 New Compton St.,

1957 on 20 Earlham Street.

Clifford Essex Biography from Classic Banjo Ning's website

Clifford Essex was born in the UK in 1863.
Essex was an entrepreneur who had an amazing knack for foreseeing the next thing that the public would want. In his early days he started his own touring Minstrel/Pierrot groups that travelled round the holiday resort towns of the UK performing to appreciative audiences, and in the process, doing more to popularise the banjo than any other medium had previously done. He is credited with the 'invention' of the concert party, introducing ragtime to the UK and setting up the first ragtime dance bands, publishing the BMG magazine, manufacturing banjos and publishing banjo music.
Essex organized his concert parties both to make money and to publicise his growing banjo business. He personally organized the events and he also engaged the artists and players. No expense was spared and artists of the standing of Alfred Farland and Vess Ossman were brought over from America. UK players Charlie Rogers, Sid Turner, Olly Oakley, John Pidoux and even the great Joe Morley performed at his concerts.

Essex enjoyed moving in high society circles and his association with the aristocracy and wealthy helped him in his future ventures. It is reported that his social circle included The Prince of Wales, Duke of Clarence, Oscar Wilde, Arthur Conan Doyle, George Bernard Shaw, Bram Stoker, Henry Irving and numerous others of the rich and famous. Henry Irving had rented 15a Grafton Street in London and Essex took over these premises to start his banjo empire.

There is a story, possibly apocryphal, that Essex had invited Bram Stoker, who was a talented banjo player, to join in with his banjo venture at Grafton Street. Bram Stoker is quoted as saying that it was Clifford Essex's lean looks and demeanor that were the inspiration for his portrayal of Count Dracula in the now famous books!

Prior to World War One, Essex set up numerous dance bands and up to ten per night were out performing at clubs, concert halls and especially for his friends, the high society, at their social and private functions and balls.

Essex was also a banjo teacher and somehow managed to teach up to SIXTY pupils a week along with all the other business ventures. He was described as a 'human dynamo'. Clifford Essex had set out to achieve one thing and in that he succeeded, to make the 'Clifford Essex Company' 'The home of the Banjo'.

In the late 1890s Clifford Essex had been in partnership with Alfred Cammeyer selling Zither banjos, but this association rapidly ceased and in 1900 Essex formed his own company, Clifford Essex & Co. Initally banjo manufacture was sub-contracted out to several British luthiers, but later on, in 1915, the production was moved in house and it remained a manufacturing company until 1942 when the company, after a few changes of address and name, went into liquidation.
A few years later, in 1946, Clifford Essex died.

Clifford Essex Biography from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Clifford Essex (1869 – 2 February 1946) was an English banjoist, teacher, and instrument manufacturer during the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

Essex formed a partnership with Alfred D. Cammeyer in 1883 and sold banjos under the brand "Essex and Cammeyer", in Piccadilly, London, before establishing his own firm in 1900, as Clifford Essex And Co, in Soho, the company that would eventuate into a private entity under varying titles, existing until 1977. The Company was revived after a long hiatus in 2007, by former employee and prominent banjoist Clem Vickery. Essex manufactured banjos and mandolins, wrote books on playing the banjos, performed in various bands, in particular "The Clifford Essex Banjo Band", described as a banjo orchestra and gave music lessons in London from 1883 until his death around 1946.[1]

In 1903 he founded BMG magazine, an initialism for Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar which is still being published in England.[2]

He died at his home in Wimbledon on 2 February 1946; he was 87.[3]

References

1. *"Clifford Essex company history". CliffordEssex.net. Retrieved 17 April 2013.*
2. *"BMG Magazine website". BMG. Archived from the original on 14 May 2013. Retrieved 17 April 2013.*
3. *Griffith, Hubert (4 February 1946). "Obituary – Mr. Clifford Essex". The Times. No. 50367. p. 6.*

External links

- Clifford Essex Co.
- BMG magazine

Clifford Essex History from the Clifford Essex's website

In 1893 Clifford Essex and Alfred D. Cammeyer formed a partnership with offices and teaching studios at 59 Piccadilly, London. At first, the banjos and zither-banjos they sold under the brand name of 'Essex & Cammeyer' were made for them by Temlett, Weaver, Wilmshurst and Windsor, but early in 1896 they opened their own workshops at 13 Greek Street, Soho, and were soon employing fourteen workmen to make banjos and zither-banjos for them. Following a major disagreement between the two men in 1900, the partnership was dissolved, and production of 'Essex & Cammeyer' instruments ceased.

In 1900 Clifford Essex & Co. was born, and in 1903 Clifford Essex launched BMG, the magazine for all players of fretted instruments. Clifford Essex Banjos, Mandolins & Guitars have always been made by superior craftsmen, and to this day they are in huge demand throughout the world. When Clifford Essex dissolved his partnership with Cammeyer in 1900, he formed his own firm at 15a Grafton Street, New Bond Street, London. Instruments bearing the name Clifford Essex Co. were put on the market, and at first all the banjos were made for Clifford Essex by Spencer, Weaver, Langham [London] and Houghton [Birmingham]. In 1904 he started his own workshops at The Oval, Kensington, with Alfred Dare as foreman, and when Richard Spencer died in 1915, Clifford Essex bought his plant and stock and took his key craftsmen into his employ.

Although most of the Clifford Essex instruments sold in those early days were made in the Clifford Essex workshops, some were still made by the above-mentioned outside makers. The Weaver-made banjos were made to Weaver's own design, although they were sold with the Clifford Essex label on them. In December 1919 the firm's title changed to Clifford Essex & Son, and by then only their cheapest model 'The Popular' was made outside their own workshops by Houghton of Birmingham.
A. P. Sharpe, a former Managing Director of Clifford Essex, wrote several very informative books which were published by the company.

In February 1936 the firm became a private limited company, and the title changed to Clifford Essex & Son Ltd. Soon after the outbreak of World War 2 the manufacture of musical instruments was greatly reduced due to a shortage of materials and the military call up of craftsmen. The firm went into liquidation in 1942, and all manufacturing ceased, but A. P. Sharpe, as a former employee of Clifford Essex, re-formed the company under the title Clifford Essex Music Co. Ltd., and continued to make quality musical instruments.

After demobilisation in 1945, Marco Roccia, master luthier, who had joined the company in 1927, returned to his position with the Clifford Essex Music Co. Ltd., and was solely responsible for all repair work. In addition, he made some very beautiful instruments including 'concert size' classical guitars, plectrum guitars, banjos and mandolins, all of which were entirely hand made by this master craftsman. Marco remained with the company for over thirty years.
Banjos made after 1945 bear the initials C.E. in mother-of-pearl, inlaid into the peg head.

Clifford Essex banjos ranged in price from (in today's money) £3.50 to £60.00. Model names, from the cheapest, were – Popular, Clipper, Imperial, C.E. Special, Boudoir Grand Professional (the only 12" hoop model), Regal, X.X. Special (later called Concert Grand), Paravox, Paragon, New Paragon, Paragon Artist and Paragon Deluxe (the last two being gold plated). In addition the firm produced 3 grades of zither-banjo, Grade 3 (the cheapest), Grade 2 and Grade 1. Clifford Essex banjos can be dated in conjunction with the firm's title.

1900 – 1936, 15a Grafton Street;

1936 – 1942, 90 Shaftesbury Avenue;

1942 – 1957, 8 New Compton Street;

1957 – 1976, 20 Earlham Street;

2007 – Norfolk-Based Internet Company.

From 1942 onwards Clifford Essex flourished under the directorship of the much respected A.P. Sharpe (AP) until his untimely death at the age of just sixty-one in January 1968. During the fifties Alan Middleton worked closely with AP as his right hand man, and during the sixties Clem Vickery took over the role. Alan Middleton left to pursue a teaching career, and in 1970 Clem Vickery left to become a professional banjoist. When AP died the company rapidly went downhill, the new management was a disaster, music rights were sold, BMG became an apology for a magazine and lost most of its readers, and less than ten years after AP's death the company ceased to exist.

On August 6th 2007 Clem Vickery achieved his life-time ambition and re-established Clifford Essex Music Co. Ltd.; he also resurrected the company's famous fretted instrument magazine 'BMG' in its original tried and tested format. Both Clem and Alan work closely together in the production of BMG. The Clifford Essex music catalogue is growing fast, and the company is once again making world class instruments. The Company which Clifford Essex began over a hundred years ago, has adapted to the modern world.

Clifford Essex Music Co. Ltd,

24. Norwich Street, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 2HF.

Email: cliffordessex@msn.com

Tel: 01485 529323

Publishers of BMG magazine.

www.cliffordessex.net

The Clifford Essex Shop and Studio, in *BMG Magazine*, 1926-1927

15a, GRAFTON STREET.

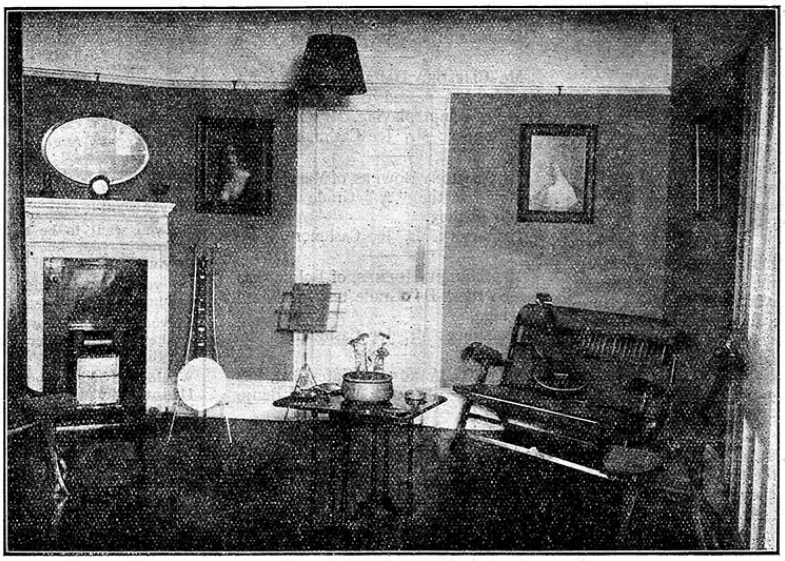
THE HOME OF THE BANJO, MANDOLIN AND GUITAR.

THOUSANDS of players of the banjo and kindred instruments who correspond regularly with Messrs. Clifford Essex and Son, at 15a, Grafton Street, Bond Street, from all parts of the world, must often have wondered about the inside and outside appearance of these famous premises, which are situated at the corner of Grafton Street and Bond Street. We intend, therefore, to present through the medium of "*B.M.G.*" a series of little sketches and photographic illustrations, for the benefit of players who, we feel sure, would like to know something of the address that for twenty-six years has been the Home of the Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar.

It is interesting to know that before these premises were taken over by Mr. Clifford Essex, they were occupied by a world-wide celebrity. The *Strand Magazine* for September, 1892, contains a long illustrated interview which begins as follows:

"The opening of the door of 15a, Grafton Street, Bond Street, secures admission to one of the most interesting domiciles in the country. It is the home of the leading actor in the land—Sir Henry Irving. Here lives a man whom to meet and talk with means a real privilege; the romance inseparable from the player's life pervades every nook and corner of his house. . . . The staircase is replete with grand bronzes. One of Don Quixote is just opposite the dining-room door. Here, too, are many views of Venice, and a number of sketches by Seymour Lucas. The dining-room overlooks Bond Street. It is a distinctly comfortable room."

Messrs. Clifford Essex and Son's premises occupy the whole of the second floor and consist of eight large rooms. This month we give a photographic illustration of one of the rooms that is used solely for the purpose of tuition. The door directly opposite leads into a tastefully appointed waiting-room. Future issues of "*B.M.G.*" will contain illustrations of the other rooms with descriptive notes, and we hope to be able to include in the series illustrations of the rooms as they were when occupied by the late Sir Henry Irving.



A CLIFFORD ESSEX STUDIO AT 15a, GRAFTON STREET.

HOW TO PLAY THE MANDOLIN SOLO IN THIS ISSUE.

WHEN playing the mandolin solo "Happy Days in Dixie," there will be found much more staccato playing than tremolo.

This number has to be taken fairly quickly, so the player should strike all notes shorter than a crotchet, tremolo all notes longer than crotchet, strike crotchets when only a single one occurs between shorter notes, and tremolo crotchets where two or more occur consecutively.

If the player has any doubt about the time of the first complete bar, he should count four beats in a bar like this:—

This is a very effective number when played with piano accompaniment; the latter can be obtained from Messrs. Clifford Essex & Son for 1s.

The S.X. Wrist Rest for the Banjo. 2/6, post extra.

15a, GRAFTON STREET.

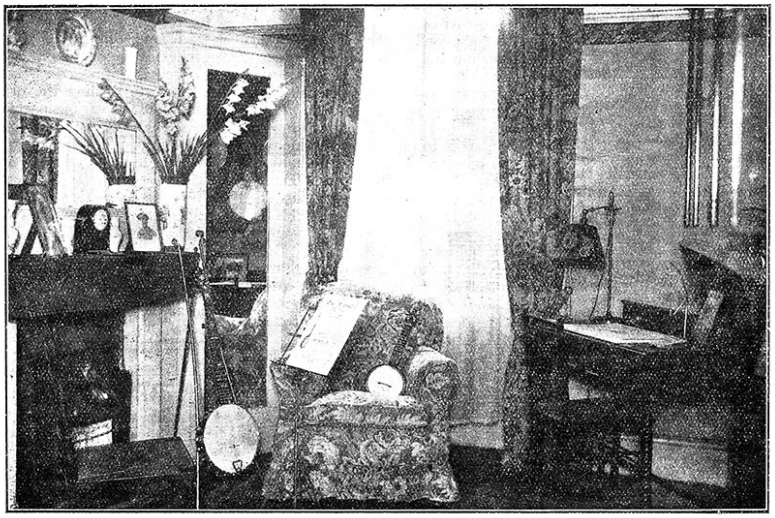
THE HOME OF THE BANJO, MANDOLIN AND GUITAR.

IN last month's issue of "*B.M.G.*" we gave a photographic illustration of a Clifford Essex Studio at 15A, Grafton Street. The door shown in the centre of that photo leads directly into the waiting-room which we now illustrate on this page. This room was originally Sir Henry Irving's dressing-room, and in the corner at the left of the window can be seen the fitted wardrobe with mirror front which is now used as a store cupboard.

The window in the centre of the photo overlooks Bond Street; on the right of the room, and extending for its full length, is a showcase filled with banjos, tenor-banjos and banjolins.

In the photo, these are not shown directly, but some of the instruments can be seen reflected in the long mirror.

Next month we will give photographic illustrations of the showroom and band-room.



A WAITING-ROOM AT 15a, GRAFTON STREET.

THE ESSENTIALS OF HARMONY FOR "B.M.G." READERS.

By Emile Grimshaw.

XX.

COUNTERPOINT.

(*Continued from last month.*)

HERE are some rules to be observed when writing the First Species of Counterpoint (note against note):—

1. Consecutive octaves and fifths are, of course, forbidden. The first are weak in effect, while the latter are discordant. The bad effect of consecutive fifths can readily be noted by any banjoist who will place his first finger across the first, second and third strings *barré* and play two note chords on the first and third strings from any fret to another like this:—

2. The counterpoint should consist chiefly of 3rds and 6ths.

3. The unison should never be used except on the first or last notes.

4. Contrary motion is to be preferred to similar motion.

5. The student should endeavour to use 3rds and 6ths in contrary motion to the melody.

6. The two parts must not overlap; *i.e.*, the under part must not proceed to a note higher than that occurring in the melody in the previous chord, and *vice versa*.

7. The counterpoint must never cross the melody, but must remain either above or below it throughout the movement.

8. If the notes of the melody move smoothly and without many leaps, then the counterpoint had better be written with leaps, and *vice versa*.

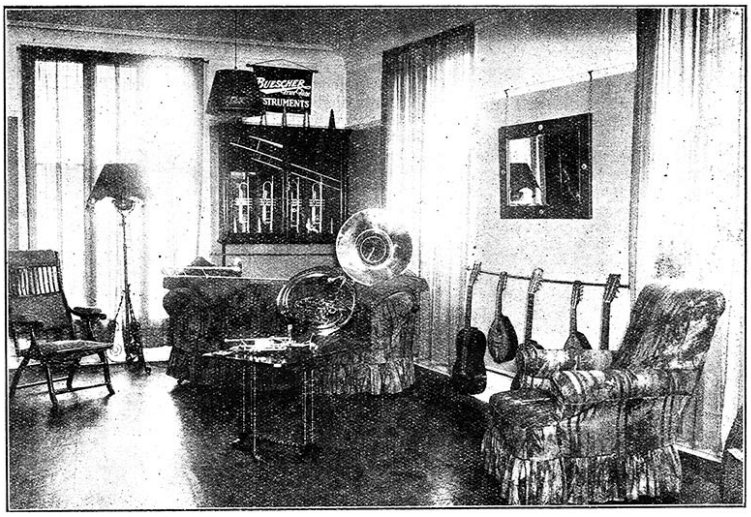
(*To be continued.*)

The Grover Non-Tip Bridge.—Always remains rigid. Price 1/7 post free.

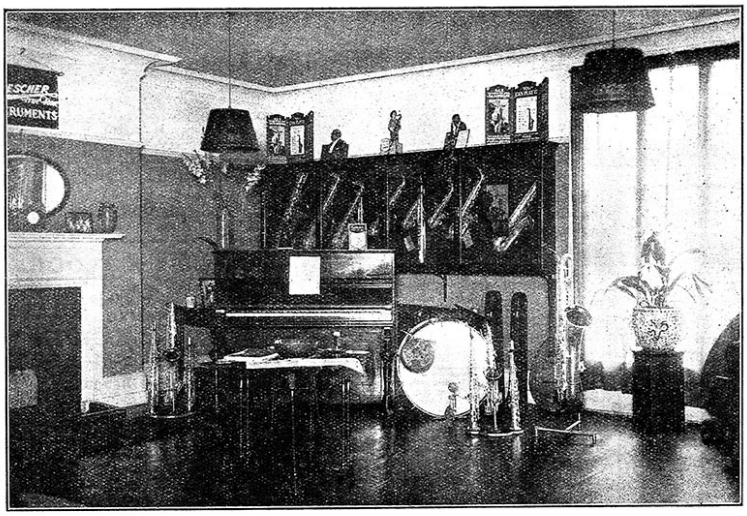
15a, GRAFTON STREET.

THE HOME OF THE BANJO, MANDOLIN AND GUITAR.

THIS month, we give two photographic reproductions of a Clifford Essex Showroom which is used principally for the display and demonstration of Buescher saxophones, trumpets, and trombones. In the upper illustration, the two windows on the right look down directly on to Bond Street, while through the window on the left (made double by the late Sir Henry Irving in order to minimise the noise of the traffic when he was in occupation of these premises) can be seen the entire length of New Bond Street as far as Oxford Street, which crosses at the top.



This room is also used for Band rehearsals. The twenty-five members of the Clifford Essex Balalaika Band rehearsed in this room before the war, and it is here that the big banjo band held their weekly meetings.



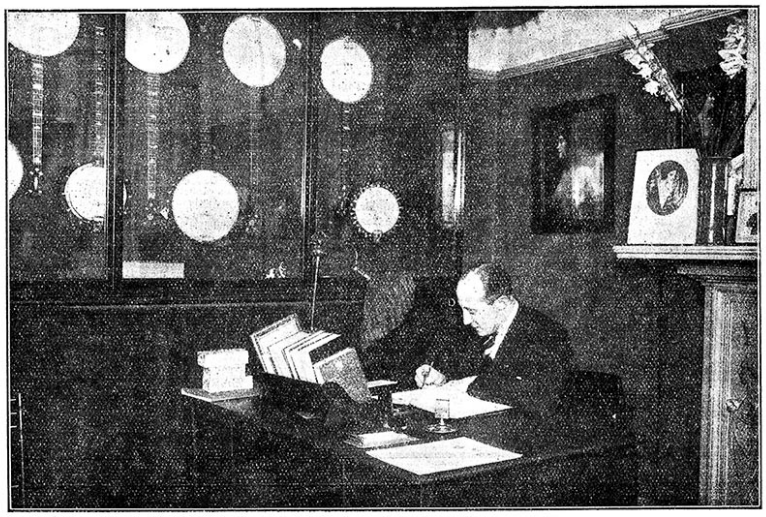
Here also the late Vess Ossman gave special banjo recitals before a specially invited gathering of banjo enthusiasts which did much to advance both the style of playing, and the standard of banjo composition.

In next month's issue of "*B.M.G.*" we hope to illustrate the Clifford Essex Dance Department, a section of the business that has grown tremendously since its inception in 1913.

The Grover Non-Tip Bridge.—Always remains rigid. Price 1/7 post free.

15a, GRAFTON STREET.

THE HOME OF THE BANJO, MANDOLIN AND GUITAR.



OUR illustrations this month show two aspects of the Clifford Essex Band Department, a sideline of the business that has increased year by year since it was first started in 1913. The top photo reproduction shows Mr. Clifford Essex, Junior, who is in charge of this department, and the lower illustration Miss Purden, whose work is solely connected with this section.

Clifford Essex Dance Bands not only appear at many of the smartest and most exclusive society functions in London, but they are also sent out to all parts of England and Scotland. Occasionally there will be six bands out on the one night. During the summer months when private dances are not held as frequently, Clifford Essex Bands are engaged at some of the more popular seaside resorts. In recent years these have included Scarborough, Frinton, Skegness and the Isle of Wight. At Seaview, for many years past, the dances promoted by Mr. Clifford Essex under his personal supervision have been one of the principal and most successful attractions of the summer season, and at Scarborough the music provided by the Clifford Essex Band has been relayed and broadcast regularly by the British Broadcasting Company.

You will never tire of playing "The Banshee."

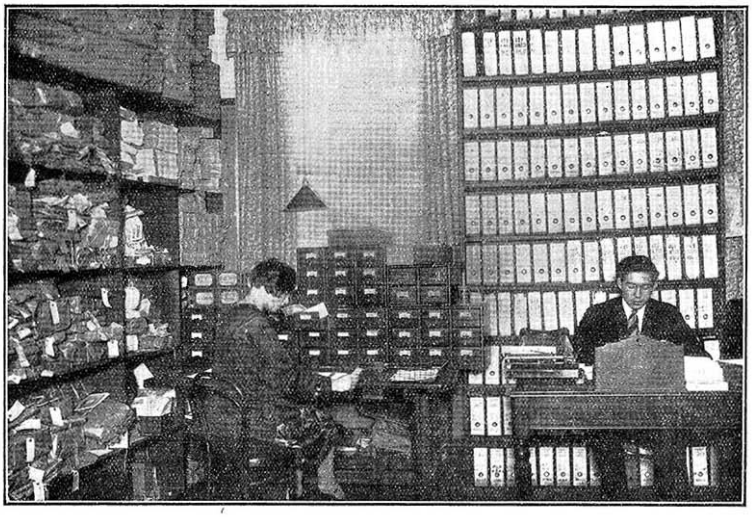
15a, GRAFTON STREET.

THE HOME OF THE BANJO, MANDOLIN AND GUITAR.

THE two illustrations given on this page will have a special interest for many readers of "*B.M.G.*" because they show two aspects of the room in which this paper is prepared for the press.

In the top photo reproduction the Editor is to be seen on the right arranging the copy for this special Christmas number.

Extending in rows from floor to ceiling are the letter-files of the Clifford Essex Co. These are orderly arranged for easy reference, and will give an idea of the magnitude of the correspondence that has to be dealt with in the ordinary course of business. The lower illustration gives an excellent view of the card index system which requires the exclusive attention of two members of the staff. If you, now reading these lines, are a subscriber to "*B.M.G.*," your name will be in that index, together with over sixteen thousand other subscribers, or customers of Clifford Essex & Son.

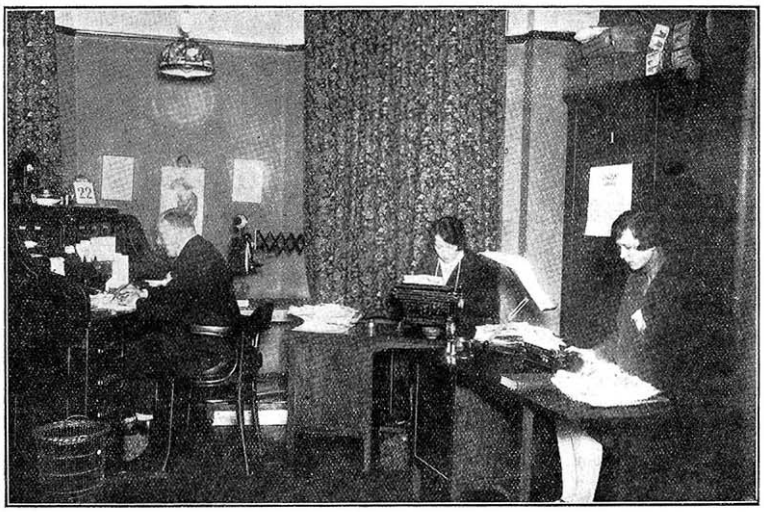


Many readers have written saying how they have appreciated these pictures of 15A, Grafton Street. This series will be continued in our issues of "*B.M.G.*" for January and February next.

"Happy Go Lucky" is just ready for Banjo—finger style, or plectrum.

15a, GRAFTON STREET.

THE HOME OF THE BANJO, MANDOLIN AND GUITAR.



OUR photo-reproduction this month shows a section of Mr. Clifford Essex's private office, with the principal of the firm seated on the left.

It is here that most of the immense correspondence is dealt with. Many banjo enthusiasts scattered all over the world are in constant touch with the old country principally through the medium of 15A Grafton Street, and no matter how busy he may be, Mr. Clifford Essex always finds time to answer personally these letters from customers abroad.

Next week we shall give an illustration of the Sales and Dispatch Department.

HOW TO PLAY "SLIP ALONG POLKA."

(JOE MORLEY.)

BY CLIFFORD ESSEX.

THIS will be found a very effective solo, and not by any means too difficult if it is practised slowly at first, and with careful attention to the right-hand alternate fingering.

The best way will be to pencil the right-hand fingering underneath the notes in the manner I shall indicate, before commencing to play it, and master one movement thoroughly before passing on to the next.

In the introduction the G's with the octave string sign ♯ are made on the fifth string, and those without the sign on the first string at the fifth fret. This enables greater rapidity to be acquired.

In playing the four-note chords the first, second, *and third* fingers and the thumb are employed. Make a rallentando in the fourth bar, and notice the pause mark over the last chord.

Pencil this right-hand fingering underneath the notes after the double bars in line 1—

||+ ·· |· + · · · ·· +|· ·· + · + · ·· +|
|·· + · + · ·· ·|·· + ·· · + + ··|·

and under similar bars where they occur, and do not pass a single mistake when practising. In line 3, bar 4, put a snap sign over the last note D.

It will greatly simplify the study of this movement if the time be carefully counted 1, 2, 3, 4 quaver beats, and an accent made on the first and third beats. Try the effect and you will see how it marks the polka rhythm.

In the second movement put this right-hand fingering under the notes after the double bars—

|+ · + · · + · + · |+ · + · + · + |
|+ · + · + · + · + |· + + +|

and similar bars in the same way. This will enable the necessary rapidity to be acquired.

Bar 1 of line 6 will want a good deal of practice to get the snap clearly. Finger this and the following bar :—

|· + · + · + S +|· + · + · +|

Bar 1 might be played without the snap if practised—

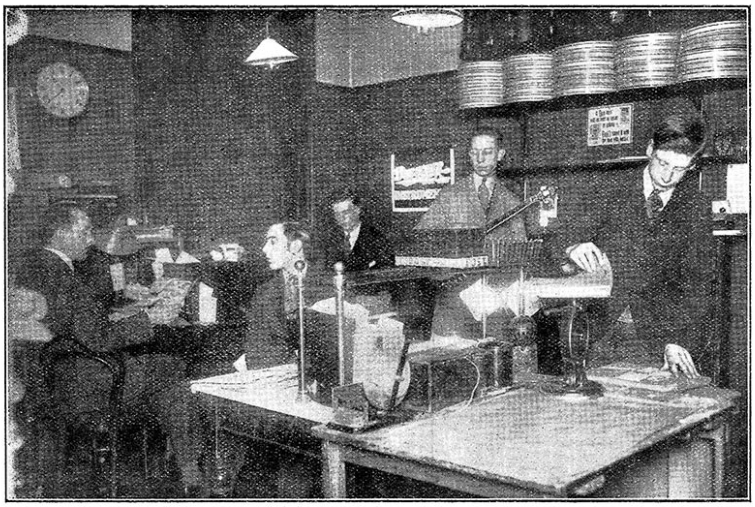
|· + · + · + · +|

and I am not at all sure that it is not more effective without the snap, which is apt to sound rather a weak note.

The rendering of duets is an excellent method of improving one's knowledge of time.

15a, GRAFTON STREET.

THE HOME OF THE BANJO, MANDOLIN AND GUITAR.



OUR photo-reproduction this month shows the Sales and Dispatch Department. Mr. Charles Sarrington, whose name will probably be familiar to thousands of customers who have seen it on their receipted invoices, is to be seen on the left. Mr. Sarrington has been with the firm for twenty years, and is in charge of this department. Adjoining this room is another where instruments are packed in wooden boxes for dispatch to all parts of the world after being carefully tested and played upon by experts.

"B.M.G." DIPLOMAS.

MR. A. E. LEWIS has been appointed "*B.M.G.*" Diploma Examiner for Liverpool and district.

MR. HORACE FREDERICK MORLEY, of Hull, has passed the "A" Grade test for Banjo playing.
Teacher: Mr. T. Clark.
Examiner: Miss Sabina Smith.

MR. E. H. KEYS, of East Dulwich, has been appointed an Examiner for "*B.M.G.*" Diplomas.

MR. F. PALMER, of Oldham, has passed the "A" Grade test for Banjo playing.
Examiner: Mr. Joe Cashmore.

MR. RICHARD COLLINS, of Bolton, has passed the "B" Grade test for Banjo playing.
Teacher: Mrs. Lobb.
Examiner: Mr. Joe Cashmore.

MR. FREDERICK ARMSTRONG, of Bolton, has passed the "A" Grade test for Banjo playing.
Teacher: Mrs. Lobb.
Examiner: Mr. Joe Cashmore.

MR. RUDOLPH BOHM, of Manchester, has passed the "B" Grade test for Banjo playing.
Examiner: Mr. Joe Cashmore.

MR. FREDERICK BEASON, of Boothen, has passed the "A" Grade test for Banjo playing.
Examiner: Mr. H. A. Wencker.

MR. STANLEY GEORGE SARGEANT, of Croydon, has passed the "B" Grade test for Banjo playing.
Teacher: Mr. W. Fuller.
Examiner: Mr. Clifford Essex.

MR. ERNEST FLETCHER, of Cossall, has passed the "A" Grade test for Banjo playing.
Teacher: Mrs. Elsie Dawson.
Examiner: Mr. Sanders Papworth.

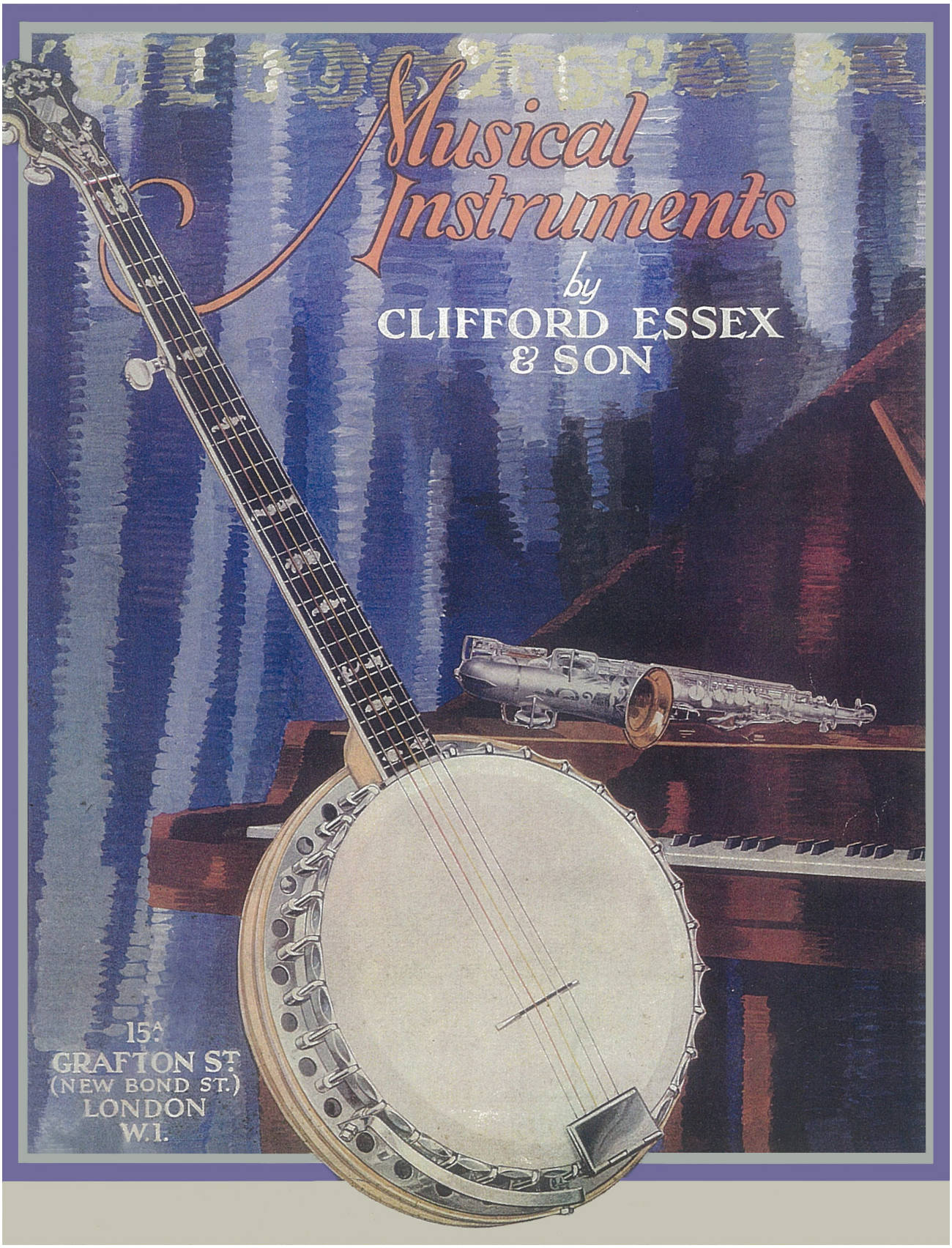
MRS. ELSIE DAWSON, of Sandiacre (Derbyshire) (see page iii.), has been appointed Examiner for Derby and district.

MR. ERIC A. GREENWOOD, of Batley, has passed the "A" Grade test for Banjo playing.
Teacher: Mr. Albert Lyles.
Examiner: Mr. W. Whittington.

Your friend would learn to play a second Banjo part with the greatest ease.

Catalogue de 1928

https://archive.org/details/CliffordEssexCatalogue/mode/2up



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Quelques annonces publicitaires parues dans le *BMG Magazine*

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The Weaver Banjos (by Richard Ineson)

Perhaps the most highly regarded English banjo maker was Alfred Weaver, he was born in 1857, and established a workshop in Upper St. Martins Lane, London, W.C., in 1878. His later addresses were 139, Long Acre and, 121 Sinborough Road, Earls Court, London S.W.

Weaver banjos are characterised by their plain lines and simple, functional mother of pearl position marks. The shape of the heel of the neck is very individual and has been described as spoon shaped, it tends to be longer on Weaver banjos, especially the banjos produced prior to 1900, than on those of other makers.

Several transitions in the design of Weaver banjos can be identified.

In his very early instruments made around 1878 – 80, the shanks of the hooks pulling down the vellum are bent, the fingerboards of these instruments are sometimes made from rosewood rather than ebony and were sometimes covered in ornately engraved, German Silver (white brass).

The nuts fixing the bracket shoes to the hoop are small and square and have an integral brass washer, the heel of the neck can be extremely elongated, push – in type violin pegs are always used, the balls at the base of the nuts, securing the straining hooks, are separate from the actual nut, (this was possibly intended as a locknut device), the overall impression of these instruments is that they are rather 'home made' in appearance.

Later, Weaver seems to have improved the quality of his metalwork, though his work remained highly individual, the nuts holding the bracket shoes became larger and hexagonal, the shanks on the hooks were straight, Grover pegs were fitted in place of the violin pegs, the balls on the nuts securing the straining hooks became integral with the nuts.

Most Weaver banjos were fitted with a small, ebony tail piece though some later banjos, perhaps post 1st World War, appear to have been fitted with a metal tailpiece as a standard Fixture, the wooden type of tailpiece was simply tied on with a piece of gut as on a violin.

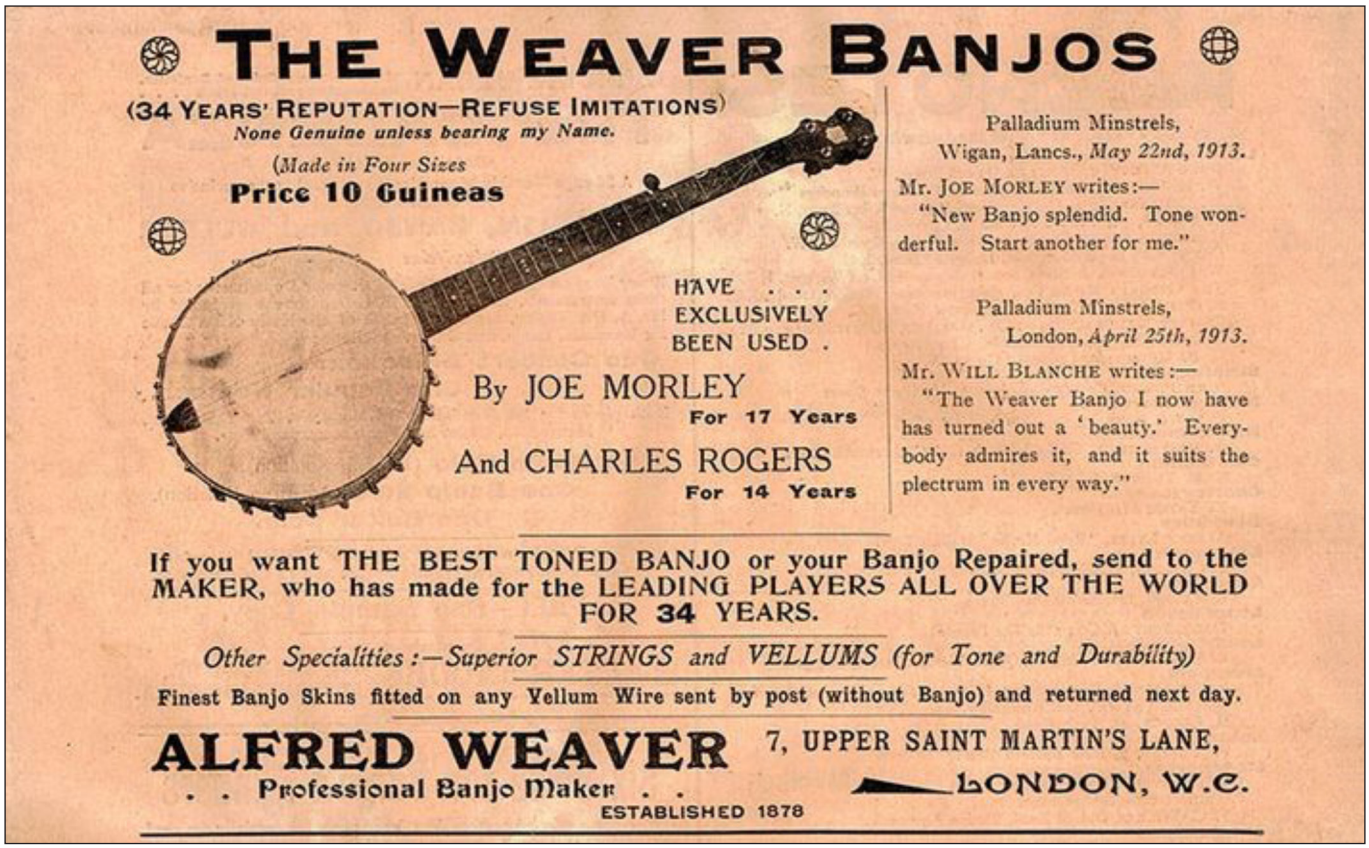
The dimensions of Weavers' banjos vary, as do the types of wood he used in their construction, I have seen rosewood, walnut and birds eye maple used for the necks. The hoop in the instruments I have seen is always made from oak, used either as the lining material in the metal covered hoop models or in the solid in the wood hoop models.

Hoop depths and diameters vary greatly, depths on early Weaver hoops seem to be around 6.0 cm later hoops are found to be as deep as 8.0 cm, early hoops tend to be less robustly made than the ones on later banjos. The diameter of the hoop seems never to be less than 27.0 cm and the largest diameter so far seen is 31.0 cm.

The bezel or, top band, on Weaver banjos is normally notched to receive the tension hooks except on very early models.

Weaver, though known predominantly, for his five stringed banjos, made all kinds of banjos – zither banjo, tenor banjo, banjeaurine, mandolin banjo, banjolin (the peghead on these instruments was violin shaped) though 1 have not come across a plectrum banjo, to date.

Marks used by Weaver on his banjos, include two versions of an oval cartouche mark which simply says, in a band, surrounding the word 'maker', A. Weaver. London.



More about The Weaver Banjos: http://www.joemorley.co.uk/pages/weaver2.htm